

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Harkins Votes in Favor Energy Assistance Legislation



*CONSUMERS MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
WEATHERPROOFING TAX BREAKS*

HARTFORD - On Tuesday, October 25, State Rep. John Harkins, R-Stratford, voted in favor of legislation that will provide incentives to homeowners to increase home heating efficiency. Senate Bill 2100, An Act Concerning Emergency Home Heating Assistance, now goes to Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who is expected to sign it into law.

The bill would establish a program to encourage households to receive home heating equipment tune-ups and home energy efficiency measures. It also creates low interest loans for eligible homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. If approved by Governor Rell, beginning Nov. 25 a variety of home weatherization products such as windows, efficient thermostats, insulation, water heaters and natural gas furnaces that meet federal energy guidelines can be purchased without the 6 percent state sales tax. The tax-free period would last until March 31, 2006.

“This legislation will help homeowners cope with what may be a very expensive heating season,” said Rep. Harkins, who serves as an Assistant Minority Leader. “There are some excellent incentives for people to more efficiently heat their homes. Anyone who is considering making these kind of home improvements should consider the savings that will be available this winter.”

“Not since the gas shortage of the 1970s have we witnessed such serious concern over fuel prices and energy conservation,” added Rep. Harkins. “Everyone has been hit in the wallet pretty hard with the recent hikes in gas prices. It is time we get serious about conservation and alternative fuel sources.”

The bill also provides new benefits under the Contingency Heating Assistance Program, an approved but unfunded component of CEAP. This change would provide a \$300 benefit for non-LIHEAP households up to 60% of the median state income, with an additional \$200 available for households utilizing deliverable fuels.